

FOREST ADMINISTRATION REPORT

OF THE

NORTHERN CIRCLE, BOMBAY PRESIDENCY,

FOR THE OFFICIAL YEAR 1888-89.



INTRODUCTION.

The official year 1888-89 may be considered in the history of the administration of the Forest Department of the Northern Circle to be a prosperous year, for satisfactory progress can be recorded in every branch of forest conservancy and works, and evidence has not been wanting to show what good service well preserved forests are capable of rendering to mankind.

2. The conviction that the forests of Western India should be regarded mainly from the standpoint of their utility in augmenting the general prosperity of the country, is steadily gaining ground, and is receiving wider acceptance, as the beneficial change that has come over the mountain and hill ranges under forest protection, in the Deccan especially, becomes more frequently commented upon by district officers and other travellers, who realise the improved climatic conditions, who see the water-supply of the country naturally increasing, who observe that fodder and grazing are provided for cattle inside the forests at times of drought and scarcity when no grazing and little fodder is obtainable outside forest preserves, who notice that labour, employment, livelihood, trade, follow in the train of successful forest conservation, that old industries flourish and new industries are created, that animal life is promoted, inasmuch as birds and beasts increase and multiply, who mark that agriculture receives renewed vigour and thrives where it was drooping before, who realise that the rivers whose sources are preserved in afforested mountainous lands maintain constant water even in the dry-months and are not subjected to disastrous floods in the season of rain, and who recognize that the soil is bound to the drainage slopes by the forest growth and is not carried away bodily from the mountain sides to be deposited in, and thereby to choke up, river-beds, water-channels, artificial reservoirs, tidal creeks and harbours, that no detritus comes down from the wooded hill-sides to bury crops on the fields below and to convert productiveness into waste.

3. A net increase of 298 square miles and 569 acres has accrued at the close of the year upon the acreage which represented the extent of forest reservations at the commencement of the year. The reserved forests have expanded by 317 square miles and 619 acres, while on the other hand the protected forests have suffered reduction by 19 square miles and 50 acres owing to conversions, either into reserved forest, or into crop-lands.

4. Forest and waste lands have been prospected in different directions with the view of constituting additional reserved and protected forests, and some selected lands have been provisionally notified during the year in order to undergo inquiry into the existence, nature and extent of rights which may be attaching to them.

5. Forest settlement proceedings have been prosecuted with vigour in six divisions, and very few of the "old forests" remain now to be settled.

6. 2,265 miles of forest boundaries have been defined upon the ground by outward and visible signs of forest reservation in the shape of 8,556 large-sized special forest-boundary marks, and 25,402 smaller ones; the expenditure upon demarcation having amounted to Rs. 11,948.

7. Privileges of appropriation and enjoyment have been exercised freely by forest villagers generally in the forests of all districts. Free grazing, the free collection and removal of dead fallen firewood, and the appropriation of minor forest produce, constitute the chief of these concessions.

8. The application of Working Plans has been extended to the forests of the Thána district, wherein 1,143 square miles of forests had been differentiated into blocks and compartments up to the close of the year; and 156 compartments had been transformed into "coupes" for the exploitation of timber, and were worked during the year.

9. Forest surveys upon a normal scale of 4 inches equal to 1 mile, but with the larger scale of 8 inches to the mile for exceptionally valuable forests, were carried on by the Forest Survey Department in the Násik, Thána, Poona and Sátára districts; and much useful work has been accomplished.

10. The institution of a special Forest Survey Branch for the forests of this Presidency is the historical event of the year. This Survey Branch consists of a survey party belonging to the Topographical Survey Department of the Government of India.

11. No changes have taken place in the constitution and numerical strength of the Controlling and subordinate establishments.

12. Protection against forest crimes, other than setting fire to forests, has been generally successful. 1,927 cases were prosecuted, convictions obtaining in 776 of them; and 6,154 detected forest offences were compounded under Section 67 of the Forest Act. 1,99,426 head of cattle of different kinds caught trespassing in plantations and closed forests were impounded under Chapter XI of the Forest Act.

13. Fire-conservancy has not been so satisfactory as could be desired. The year was a comparatively dry year, and owing to the scarcity of fodder closed forests were opened to grazing in several divisions, and thus more elements for the occurrence and prevalence of fires were present. More than one-fifth of the total forest area of the Northern Circle was traversed by fires.

14. It has not been a good year for cultural operations, for the rainfall was delayed, fickle and scanty. However, natural reproduction has not made unsatisfactory progress all over the country. Wherever protection, which is the life of forestry, has been good, there reboisement and regeneration have produced marked effect, and the augmentation of the capital value of the forests promises increased revenues in the future.

15. Communications, which render forest produce accessible to markets, have been improved and extended in all divisions by the Public Works Department, during the year, at the cost of the Provincial Services Budget, towards which the Forest Department contributes a considerable sum annually; and surveys and estimates of cost have been made of newly projected lines for timber and other traffic.

16. Buildings to serve as the offices of Range Forest Officers have been constructed also by the Public Works Department in connection with some taluka kacheris in districts where such accommodation was wanting. And forest-posts and stations for forest round and beat-guards to live in, occupying central sites within the areas entrusted to their protective care, have been built in different directions by Divisional Forest Officers at the cost of the Forest Budget.

17. Free grants of timber have been made, in all the districts save Sholápur, by the Revenue Officers, to destitute and other cultivators, who have suffered loss by fire, or have not possessed the means to re-build and repair their houses.

18. An increased quantity of timber and other forest produce has been exploited from the forests in all the divisions, a larger proportion of the forests having been brought under working operations, and a larger acreage-yield having been obtained in many cases.

19. The forest revenue of the year is the largest on record. It has increased in the last ten years from Rs. 4,48,850 in 1878-79 to Rs. 11,60,769 in 1888-89, and is by Rs. 1,23,472 greater than of the best year of the past decade.

The demand for timber has been good, and fair prices have ruled the market. From grass and grazing enhanced receipts, exceeding those of the previous year by over Rs. 77,000, have been credited: this is due in great measure to closed forest areas having been opened to cattle upon payment of fees in the Deccan and Khândesh districts owing to a scarcity of fodder. The year has been of financial prosperity.

20. The following statement shows the names of the superior Forest Officers who have been conducting the administration of the forests during the year and the stations they have occupied, with other particulars.

NORTHERN CIRCLE.

Mr. A. T. Shuttleworth, Conservator of Forests, 1st Grade, throughout the year.

No.	Forest Division.	Name of Officer.	Rank.	Designation.	From	To	REMARKS.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	North Thâna ...	Mr. A. D. Wilkins ...	Deputy Conservator of Forests, 4th Grade.	Divisional Forest Officer.	1st April 1888 ...	31st March 1889.	
		" J. H. Clabby ...	Acting Sub-Assistant Conservator of Forests, 3rd Grade.	Assistant ...	Do. ...	Do.	
		" A. R. Maidment ...	Sub-Assistant do.	Do. ...	Do. ...	7th May 1888.	
		" J. Baptista ...	Acting do. do.	Do. ...	8th May 1888 ...	22nd Sept. 1888.	
		" A. R. Maidment ...	Sub-Assistant do.	Do. ...	23rd Sept. 1888 ...	4th Dec. 1888.	
		" J. Baptista ...	Acting do. do.	Do. ...	5th Dec. 1888 ...	22nd do.	
2	South Thâna ...	" A. R. Maidment ...	Sub-Assistant do.	Do. ...	23rd do. ...	31st March 1889.	
		Mr. G. P. Millett ...	Assistant Conservator of Forests, 1st Grade.	Divisional Forest Officer.	1st April 1888 ...	Do.	
		" R. H. Madan ...	Acting do. 3rd Grade.	Assistant ...	Do. ...	7th July 1888.	
		" G. S. Hinge ...	Acting Sub-Assistant Conservator of Forests, 3rd Grade.	Do. ...	8th July 1888 ...	10th October 1888	
		" R. H. Madan ...	Acting Assistant do.	Do. ...	12th October 1888	31st March 1889.	
		" N. B. Oke ...	Sub-Assistant do. 1st Grade.	Do. ...	1st April 1888 ...	4th Dec. 1888 ...	Retired on pension.
3	East Khândesh.	Mr. W. G. Clabby ...	Acting Assistant Conservator of Forests, 3rd Grade.	Divisional Forest Officer.	Do. ...	4th April 1888.	
		" R. S. F. Fagan ...	Deputy Conservator of Forests, 4th Grade.	Do. ...	5th April 1888 ...	7th August 1888.	
		" W. G. Clabby ...	Acting Assistant Conservator of Forests, 3rd Grade.	Do. ...	8th August 1888.	6th October 1888	
		" F. R. Desai ...	Deputy Conservator of Forests, 1st Grade.	Do. ...	7th October 1888	31st March 1889.	
4	West Khândesh.	Mr. R. S. F. Fagan ...	Do. 4th Grade.	Do. ...	1st April 1888 ...	Do.	
		" G. S. Hinge ...	Acting Sub-Assistant Conservator of Forests, 3rd Grade.	Assistant ...	Do. ...	11th June 1888.	
		" G. K. Shahane ...	Sub-Assistant Conservator of Forests, 2nd Grade.	Do. ...	12th June 1888 ...	2nd Nov. 1888 ...	Under suspension upto 31st March 1889, and since dismissed.
		" G. S. Hinge ...	Acting do. 3rd Grade.	Do. ...	22nd Jan. 1889 ...	31st March 1889.	
5	Nasik ...	Mr. W. G. Betham ...	Deputy Conservator of Forests, 2nd Grade.	Divisional Forest Officer.	1st April 1888 ..	4th April 1888.	
		" W. G. Clabby ...	Acting Assistant Conservator of Forests, 3rd Grade.	Do. ...	5th do. ...	10th July 1888.	
		" W. G. Betham ...	Deputy Conservator of Forests, 2nd Grade.	Do. ...	11th July 1888 ...	31st March 1889.	
		" W. A. Wallinger ...	Sub-Assistant Conservator of Forests, 3rd Grade.	Assistant ...	1st April 1888 ...	Do.	
6	Ahmednagar ...	Mr. H. Mainwaring ...	Deputy Conservator of Forests, 3rd Grade.	Divisional Forest Officer.	Do. ...	2nd May 1888.	
		" S. Hornidge ...	Assistant Conservator of Forests, 1st Grade.	Do. ...	3rd May 1888 ...	11th July 1888.	
		" W. G. Clabby ...	Acting Assistant Conservator of Forests, 3rd Grade.	Do. ...	12th July 1888 ...	1st August 1888.	
		" H. Mainwaring ...	Deputy Conservator of Forests, 3rd Grade.	Do. ...	2nd August 1888	31st March 1889.	
7	Poona ...	Mr. R. C. Wroughton ...	Do. 2nd Grade.	Do. ...	1st April 1888 ..	Do.	
		" W. R. Gaunde ...	Sub-Assistant Conservator of Forests, 2nd Grade.	Assistant ...	Do. ...	Do.	
8	Satara ...	Mr. C. Greathead ...	Deputy Conservator of Forests, 3rd Grade.	Divisional Forest Officer.	Do. ...	Do.	
		" L. D. Joshi ...	Sub-Assistant Conservator of Forests, 1st Grade.	Assistant ...	Do. ...	Do.	
9	Sholâpur ...	Mr. S. Hornidge ...	Assistant do.	Divisional Forest Officer.	Do. ...	26th March 1889.	
		" H. Mainwaring ...	Deputy Conservator of Forests, 3rd Grade.	Do. ...	27th March 1889.	31st do.	
10	Surat ...	Mr. F. Gleadow ...	Do. 4th Grade.	Do. ...	1st April 1888 ...	14th April 1888.	
		" W. S. Hexton ...	Do. 1st Grade.	Do. ...	15th do. ...	31st March 1889.	
11	Panch Mahals	Mr. H. W. Keys ...	Assistant Conservator of Forests, 1st Grade.	Do. ...	1st do. ...	9th July 1888.	
		" R. H. Madan ...	Acting do. 3rd Grade.	Do. ...	10th July 1888 ...	9th October 1888	
		" H. W. Keys ...	Assistant do. 1st Grade.	Do. ...	10th October 1888	31st March 1889.	
12	Working Plans.	Mr. T. B. Fry ...	Deputy Conservator of Forests, 3rd Grade.	Do. ...	1st April 1888 ..	6th August 1888.	
		" R. C. Wroughton ...	Do. 2nd Grade.	Do. ...	7th August 1888.	5th Nov. 1888.	
		" T. B. Fry ...	Do. 3rd Grade.	Do. ...	6th Nov. 1888 ...	31st March 1889.	